

**Remembering:** Any of you of my generation or older remembers where you were and what you were doing when you heard that President Kennedy had been shot. I think all of us, including two younger generations now, will always remember where we were and what we were doing when we heard about the attacks on 9/11/01. I was not yet in Congress, but was in my first year as a freshman Assemblyman in the California Legislature. I was at my home in Sacramento that morning reading the paper and quietly doing e-mails and preparing to write one of these missives, which I had already been regularly writing for a year to that point. My then Chief-of-Staff called me at home to ask if I was watching the news. "No", I replied. He said, "A plane crashed into the world Trade Center in New York". "You mean like a Cessna or something?" I asked. "No", he responded, "a big plane. You should turn on the TV". I did. The State Capitol was closed that day as they assessed attack risks there. My house was under the flight pattern for Sacramento Airport and it was eerily quiet as all planes stopped flying for several days. When we went into the State Capitol the next day, I, along with a Democratic colleague of mine, was asked to lead the Assembly in singing "God Bless America" because I was a member of my church choir and they assumed I could carry a tune.

I wrote one of these missives the next day. It is below.

I said then and I will say now that we must always remember. We must remember, yes, to honor the lives of those who died in the attack. But, also to remain vigilant that there are still many evil people around the world who aspire to end our system of government, our way of life and our decision to choose our own religion. The fight against this evil has not and will not end.

*September 14, 2001*

*This week, we are neither Republicans nor Democrats. Neither men nor women. Neither rich nor poor. The origin of our ancestry is insignificant. We are neither for one bill nor against another. We are Americans. We are unified. Unified not by a thread, but by an enormous unbreakable bond. A bond that was forged with courage in Philadelphia 225 years ago. A bond that was confirmed with courage in places like Shiloh and Gettysburg some four score years later. A bond further strengthened with courage more recently at Iwo Jima and Inchon and Khe Sahn. And through it all, a bond blessed by God.*

*Our sadness this week is matched only by our unity. Our shock matched only by our sense of*

*purpose. Our grief matched only by our resolve. Our prayers for healing equaled only by our prayers for guidance.*

*On December 7, 1941, over 2,000 Americans in uniform lost their lives in a surprise attack by a foreign power. September 17, 1862 was the single day in American history when the most Americans lost their lives in conflict during the battle of Antietam in the Civil War. Nearly 20,000 Americans were killed, missing or wounded while in uniform, during a war in which Americans were on both sides.*

*It now appears that September 11, 2001, will rival if not surpass that greatest day of American loss. But we were not on both sides. And very few were in uniform. Most were just going to work. That puts the enormity of historical perspective on what has just happened.*

*The level of our response should reflect that historic magnitude. With the President we have, and the Vice President we have, and the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Attorney General we have, I am confident that our response will be appropriate.*

*As the surrender at Appomattox followed Antietam and signatures on the USS Missouri followed Pearl Harbor, so shall another day of victory come.*

*May God guide us as we write the history of the next year. May He give us wisdom. May He cause his face to shine upon us. May He give us peace.*

*And may God Bless America.*

*JOHN CAMPBELL  
Assemblyman, 70th District*